

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SY-05 DHA-05

MCT-01 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 FBOE-00 A-01

OPR-02 PER-01 /064 W

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R 242140Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5285

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

CONFIDENTIAL SAN SALVADOR 3978

PANAMA FOR RSS AND RSO SANFORD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ES

SUBJ : VICE PRESIDENT EXPRESSES CONCERN REGARDING EMBASSY SECURITY

1. VICE PRESIDENT JULIO ASTACIO REQUEST THAT I VISIT HIM AT HIS OFFICE MONDAY MORNING (AUG 22). ASTACIO TOLD ME THAT PRESIDENT ROMERO HAD REQUESTED ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 20 (BEFORE SUNDAY BOMBINGS) THAT HE CONFIDENTIALLY INFORM ME OF GOES CONCERN FOR SECURITY OF EMBASSY GROUNDS AND PERSONNEL DURING PERIOD OF VISIT OF KING OF SPAIN TO EL SALVADOR SEPTEMBER 16. ASTACIO NOTED THAT RECENT ACTIVITIES OF TERRORIST GROUPS CAUSED CONCERN TO GOES AND THAT TERRORISTS COULD WELL PUT FORTH MAJOR EFFORT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF KING'S VISIT TO EMBARRASS GOES AND CAUSE CHAOS. HE STATED THAT ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE DIRECT ACTION AGAINST KING AND HIS PARTY, BUT THIS WAS NOT OF GREAT CONCERN IN VIEW EXTENSIVE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS PLANNED DIRECTLY FOR KING AND PARTY. HOWEVER, AN ALTERNATIVE TACTIC COULD BE ATTACK AGAINST DIPLOMATIC INSTALLATION OR PERSONNEL. THE

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LATTER COURSE WOULD BE AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN PUBLICITY WHICH WOULD DOWNPLAY OR EVEN OVERSHADOW VISIT OF KING TO EL SALVADOR. HE SAID SPANIARDS WERE PLANNING RADIO BROADCASTS THROUGHOUT ENTIRE SPANISH-SPEAKING WORLD COVERING KING'S VISIT UTILIZING SATELLITES AND PRE-EMPTING MOST OTHER BROADCASTS AT THE TIME. HE CONSIDERED THE VISIT A MAJOR HISPANIDAD EFFORT THROUGH WHICH SPAIN (ACCORDING FOREIGN MINISTER IN ANOTHER CONVERSATION)

TION) WOULD TRY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT STATE OF US-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS OFFERING TO FILL GAPS SUCH AS THAT RESULTING FROM TERMINATION US MILITARY TRAINING.

2. I ASKED WHETHER OTHER EMBASSIES ALSO ADVISED. ASTACIO STATED THAT THIS PRECAUTIONARY WARNING WAS BEING GIVEN ONLY TO US EMBASSY SINCE GOES FELT WE WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TARGET, AND DID NOT WANT TO ALARM ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY. HE EMPHASIZED PRESIDENT ROMERO HAD NO SPECIFIC INTELLIGENCE ON WHICH TO BASE CONCERN, ONLY INTUITION. THIS INTUITION WAS BASED IN PART OF PERCEPTION OF COMPETITION OR CONFLICT BETWEEN SPANISH EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HISPANIDAD AND STRENGTH OF US INFLUENCE IN LATIN AMERICA, WHICH THEY BELIEVED SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS, SOMEHOW OR OTHER, COULD USE FOR THEIR ENDS. I THANKED HIM AND SAID AFTER BOMBINGS SUNDAY AM I HAD ALREADY MET WITH STAFF TO DISCUSS EMBASSY'S SECURITY SITUATION. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION HE SAID WE COULD COUNT ON SUPPORT NATIONAL POLICE IF ADDITIONAL PROTECTION NEEDED.
LUBENSKY

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